

This week the Senate is taking up the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act, which addresses the Syrian refugee crisis—another byproduct, I might add, of the President's failure to uphold his red line. With Syria, both the United States and the European powers have had to learn a lesson the hard way: If you don't take action to solve the problem, the people who are suffering will end up on your doorstep.

Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have been killed in this conflict. Assad continues to use chlorine bombs indiscriminately to kill his own people, and ISIS executes anyone who is not considered loyal. It is no wonder the Syrian people want out.

Yet, with the mass exodus of refugees come other security concerns, including the threat of ISIS infiltrating the refugee population. Senior and U.S. law enforcement and intelligence officials have made it clear they are concerned that we don't have the ability to adequately vet Syrian refugees. As we know from reports, at least one of the terrorists responsible for the deadly attacks in Paris passed through a refugee processing checkpoint in Greece.

To quote the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, "I don't . . . put it past the likes of ISIL to infiltrate operatives among those refugees . . . that's a huge concern of ours."

The American SAFE Act helps address this concern by requiring the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Director of National Intelligence to certify that Syrian and Iraqi refugees have been thoroughly vetted and do not pose a security risk before they are allowed to enter the country. This is a reasonable request, and if the administration wants to assure the American people that these refugees are not a threat, then it should have no problem providing such certifications.

I plan to file an amendment to this bill that would also give more authority to individual States when it comes to the resettlement of refugees. Last year, many Governors expressed a desire, shared by their constituents, that Syrian refugees not be resettled in their States. My amendment would grant Governors a presence at weekly refugee resettlement meetings within the State Department and give those Governors veto power over the resettlement of certain refugees in their States. Under my amendment, if a Governor's office is not satisfied that its security concerns have been addressed by the required security checks, the Governor can veto the resettlement question. Any refugee, once admitted to the United States, would still be free to travel from State to State as he or she pleased. This amendment would simply increase States' rights by giving Governors a say in any decisions by the Federal Government to resettle large populations of refugees in their States. This is a reasonable solution to the concerns that were raised by the

Governors of over 30 States, and I hope we can have a vote on this amendment.

Over the weekend, the world witnessed another byproduct of President Obama's failing foreign policy. Thanks to a provision of the President's flawed nuclear deal with Iran, more than \$100 billion of frozen Iranian assets and oil revenue were made available to the Islamic Republic of Iran. This means that Iran's Revolutionary Guard, including the Quds Force—which is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American soldiers in Iraq—just received a big influx of cash. Again, this is thanks to the deal President Obama considers to be perhaps the major foreign policy achievement of his Presidency.

While I am glad that the hostages held by Iran are coming home to their families, it is a mistake to think this means Iran all of a sudden will now play nice. Iran's leadership knows very well that it won the lottery with this nuclear deal, and it desperately wants Iranian assets unfrozen and sanctions lifted. Now that the Iranian leadership has received its payout, Iran will be further emboldened.

When negotiating this deal, the Obama administration assured Congress that the United States would make sure Iran kept its end of the bargain. Well, it is already clear from October's ballistic missile test that Iran is determined to test the President's resolve and flout international restrictions. We cannot let those provocations go unanswered.

President Obama is right that when conflict arises, the world looks to the United States for leadership. However, it takes more than talk to provide the leadership the world needs. In his last year in office, I hope President Obama will move beyond rhetoric and start offering realistic solutions to the growing number of security concerns that face our Nation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE IRANIAN HOSTAGE RELEASE

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise on January 20, 2016, on the floor of the Senate to acknowledge this day as the 35th anniversary of the return of 53 Americans by the Iranian Government to the shores of the United States of America after captivity for 444 days in Iran. As the Members of the Senate will remember, they were employees of the U.S. Embassy in Iran who were brutally attacked, sent through mock executions, subjected to beatings, sub-

jected to brainwashing, subjected to torture, and for 444 days were out of communication with their loved ones and our country. Fortunately, we successfully negotiated their release, and on January 20, 1981, they were released back to the United States.

But that release included the execution of the Algerian Accords between the United States and the Iranians, which prohibited any hostage from suing the nation of Iran for compensation for their captivity. Since that release, many Americans in the House of Representatives and the Senate, including myself, have worked hard to try to right that wrong. I am very pleased to acknowledge that under the passage of the omnibus in December, we were able to secure funding to be able to compensate those hostages as they should have been compensated 35 years ago. We were able to take money from the Paribas bank forfeiture of Iranian funds to the U.S. Government to see to it that they were compensated in some measure for the sacrifice they made for our country.

A lot of people have written: Why would you compensate people for their captivity? Why would you go to the effort for 35 years to see to it these people got some amount of money to compensate them for their captivity? Why would we not do it? There are Americans all over the world serving in very dangerous places, serving as ambassadors and diplomats through the State Department. They should know we have their backs, not just on the days they are serving but 35 years later if they were tortured, beaten or if they were held captive.

We all rejoiced to see the Americans that were released by the Iranians. We know there were Americans taken hostage in Iraq and Baghdad 2 days later. Taking Americans hostage and using them as tools of war is something that has been happening for years and years, and the Iranian Government is at the head of it. These Americans deserve fair treatment, compensation, and recompense for all they suffered, and I am proud to say that because of a bipartisan effort in the House and Senate, we were able to do so.

I want to thank Senator CORKER, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee; Senator CARDIN, the former chairman; Senator MENENDEZ from New Jersey; Senator REID from Nevada, who was instrumental in helping; and Senator BLUMENTHAL, my ranking member on the Veterans' Affairs Committee of the Senate, for help on this bill and for all the help they brought. I want to thank the entire body of the Senate, who in December voted unanimously to see to it that the Paribas money was made available to the survivors of the people who were taken hostage in 1979.

You might remember the show "Nightline" that we see on television started with the original report in 1979 by Ted Koppel about the hostage taking. It became a television show when

they were held that long. I am glad now that the ending of that show is a successful ending, because we brought them home and we saw to it they were compensated. Some of them have passed away. Some of them had taken their own life. Some of them had difficulties. Some were never able to rid themselves of the scars of the torture and brainwashing. But this Senate and this Congress did what it was supposed to do, stood up for Americans and sent a signal to everybody who works in the State Department, who is a diplomat for our country, and who works overseas that if you are taken, we will stand behind you and we will never ever forget—whether it is 444 days or 35 years—once an American serving our country, always an American serving our country. We will always be there for you, and we will go to every effort and every length, even if it does take 35 years.

On the anniversary of their release in 1981 when they came back to the United States, we pay tribute to those great Americans who served our country and were held hostage in Iran. We give thanks that we have the kind of men and women who are willing, day in and day out, to sacrifice on behalf of our great country. May God bless each and every one of them, and may God bless the United States of America.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMERICAN SAFE ACT

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a pending legislative matter we will be discussing later in the day, the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act of 2015. This is the title of the bill that was passed by the House in November. It is now pending before the Senate, and we will be discussing it later.

I am going to talk for a few minutes, but the punch line is as indicated on this board. We are talking about who are America's foreign enemies. This is a bill that deals with Iraqi and Syrian refugees. I assert that refugees are not our enemy; ISIL is our enemy. Yet, for some strange reason, in the 18th month of a war against ISIL, Congress has been unwilling to debate our real enemy.

First, refugees are not our enemies. The refugee crisis, with refugees coming from Syria and now Iraq, has been called the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II. Four million Syrians have left their native country because of being exposed to the atrocities of being barrel-bombed by Bashar al-Assad and now the atrocities of ISIL

and other terrorist organizations. Those 4 million have left to find haven from this horrible violence, just as any family would. Over 200,000 Syrians have been killed by this violence, and now the number is probably approaching 300,000. In addition to the 4 million Syrian refugees who have left Syria to escape violence, there are an additional 8 million Syrians who have left their homes and been displaced within the country and who could leave the country at any moment as the violence continues. These refugees are victims of violence, victims of unspeakable atrocity first perpetrated by the horrible dictator Bashar al-Assad and second by terrorist groups such as ISIL. Yet this bill would say these refugees are enemies.

There is a story that means an awful lot to me personally, and I hope you will indulge me.

A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

By chance a priest came along, but when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him. "Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here."

"Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked.

The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy."

Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."

This is a story that was written 2,000 years ago, but it is not a story about yesterday, it is a story about every day of human life on this planet. They are beaten-up people lying by the side of the road, and the choice we have to make as individuals or as a society is do we pass by or do we act as the Good Samaritan did—in a compassionate way?

In fact, I would argue that the Good Samaritan story actually isn't tough enough. If we called the refugees of the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II our enemies, it is as if we were going over to the man and not passing by but kicking the man who had been beaten and robbed by bandits.

Let me move away from Scripture and talk about American values.

The Statue of Liberty that stands in New York Harbor is graced with a powerful poem, "The New Colossus," written by an American poet, Emma Lazarus. Emma Lazarus was a member of a very prominent, multigenerational Jewish family in New York. There was a fundraising campaign to build the pediment upon which the Statue of

Liberty stands in New York Harbor. The Federal Government didn't have the money, so the fundraising was done privately. Emma Lazarus wrote a poem about the Statue of Liberty for a fundraising contest to help raise money, and that is why the statue is there now. The poem is called "The New Colossus." The Colossus references one of the wonders of the ancient world, the Colossus of Rhodes. Emma Lazarus wrote the poem about the Statue of Liberty, calling it the "New Colossus."

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;

Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand

A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes
command

The air-bridged harbor that twin cities
frame.

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!"
Cries she

With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your
poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe
free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to
me,

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

The debate that we will undertake about this bill, about whether we call refugees enemies is a debate about who we are as a nation. Let's honor our history, let's honor our values, and let's do what Americans have always done—been willing to extend a hand to those who are victimized by atrocity in other lands, rather than extend the back of our hand and label them as enemies.

Now, I don't dislike everything about this bill we are about to debate. I actually really like the title. The content, I don't like. The title, "American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act of 2015." We have an enemy. We have been at war with ISIL for 18 months. We have spent \$5 billion in this war. We have deployed thousands of American troops in this war. Eleven members of the American Armed Services have been killed while on deployment in Operation Inherent Resolve. We have an enemy. The enemy is not refugees from Syria—the enemy is ISIL.

We all know the facts about ISIL, this organization that claims to be inspired to create a worldwide caliphate. They have slaughtered Christians and other religious minorities by the thousands. They have sold women into slavery by the thousands. They have beheaded American hostages, including American aid workers. If there is a modern-day equivalent of a Good Samaritan, it is an American aid worker who is trying to help somebody out. ISIL has kidnapped, captured, and beheaded American aid workers. The number of deaths just this weekend—400 more people kidnapped by ISIL in Iraq and Syria. The number of deaths have been in the tens of thousands by ISIL, and as I have said, beheading American hostages, 11 American servicemembers killed, but it is beyond